



Stitch Action Photography

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PARTS:

- [Camera \(1\)](#)
[with an action sequence mode.](#)
- [Computer \(1\)](#)

SUMMARY

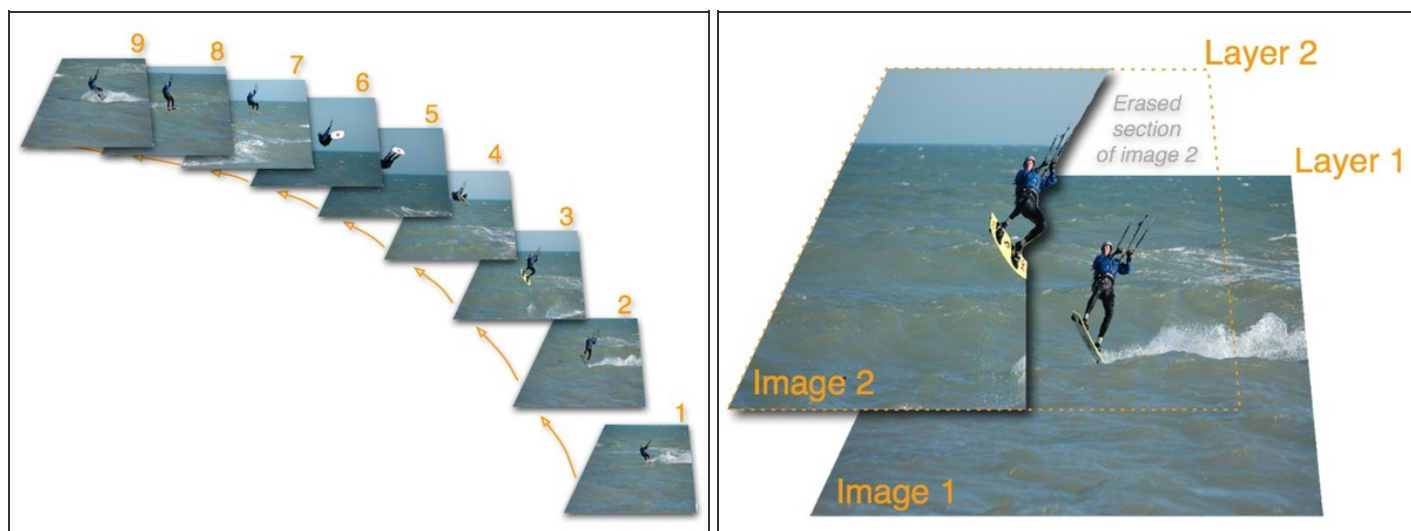
It's very rewarding to create a picture that conveys more than what a single image can capture. Whether the picture is of baby's first steps or an Olympic gymnast's somersault, the process at work conveys motion in a static image. Stitching multiple images together is a form of time-lapse photography. In traditional time-lapse the output is a video. But here we'll place each frame on top of the other, allowing viewers to replay the action in their minds. Photo sequencing only works when the object moves across a static background. A dog performing a series of tricks at a show works well; a runner directly approaching the camera does not. Subjects can be anything from a bird in flight to a snowboarder's jump.

Step 1 — Set up your canvas and align the images.



- First, you need a graphics application that handles multiple layers, and it's easier if you have a graphics pen. A mouse is OK, but a bit cumbersome.
- Create your canvas, the space in which your photos will be laid out, with a height that's double the image, and a width equaling all images laid end to end.
- If you have three pictures, each 800×600 pixels, your canvas will be 2400×1200 pixels. Place your images on the canvas, giving each its own layer. Place image 1 in the first layer, image 2 in the second layer, etc.
- If the photographer panned the camera during the sequence, you need to line up the background. I used the horizon for vertical alignment, and spaced the rider evenly for horizontal alignment. The waves were moving, so I had no other point of reference between images.
- Start by aligning images 1 and 2, turn other images to “invisible,” and set image 2 to 50% transparent. Then move image 2 around until you are set. Repeat with image 3 at 50% over 2, and so on.

Step 2 — Edit the images.



- Now the real fun begins. This is where having a graphics pen helps. Similar to the alignment step, set image 2 to 50-80% transparent (don't adjust image 1), and turn all the other images to 100% transparent/invisible/off.
- Approach editing as you would a set of stairs. Step 1 sits at the bottom, 2 sits on top of 1, and 3 sits on top of 2. Cut away any part of the second step as long as there is a piece of the first step below it. If you cut too much away, you will see all the way into the basement, aka the background layer.
- When taking the photograph, capture more back- ground rather than focusing in on the object. Turn off auto features for shutter speed and aperture; all images should have the same brightness and contrast. And be familiar with the computer's "undo" feature. Good luck!

This project first appeared in [CRAFT Volume 02](#), pages 117-118.

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